

THE EXPOSITOR

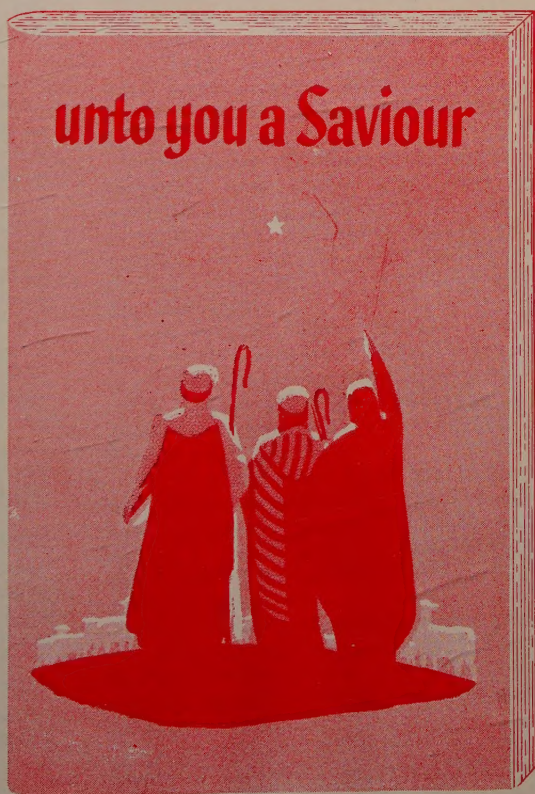
D • H O M I L E T I C • R E V I E W



JOURNAL OF PRACTICAL CHURCH METHODS

Special Christmas cover of Gospel of Luke is a soft blue with the shepherds and sheep in gold blue. The King James text.

Christian Gospel is obtainable at the offices of The American Bible Society. See inside front cover



C O N T E N T S



1000-tons of Bibles <i>C. Irving Benson</i>	289
End of Tether <i>J. Ithel Jones</i>	290
Christmas Bible	286
Prayer	291
Church Methods	292
Pew Appraises Pulpit	
Candlelight Service	
Christmas Program	
Vesper Service	
Week of Prayer	
Farmers at Crossroads	
Christmas Carol Folders	
Christmas Folders	
Work-day for Christ	
Worship and Living	
Prayers: Susanna Wesley	
Prayers: Martin Luther	
Divine Mystery (poem)	
Sermons	296
Sunday, Use Of	
<i>Arthur H. Kolsti</i>	
Things That Hinder	
<i>Clarence E. Macartney</i>	
Book Reviews	308
Topical Index	309
Buyers Guide	310

A Journal of Practical Church Methods

UNTO YOU A SAVIOUR

IT WOULD be hard to find four words that epitomize the wonderful story of Christmas better than the four that head this column-

Advance requests for this beautiful 64-page Gospel indicate that it will be widely used by Sunday-School teachers for pupils; youth groups and others who will distribute them to hospital patients; business men who will present them to their associates and employees; and pastors who will send them to their people.

Perhaps the widest use of the Christmas Gospel will be made by those who want to send their friends a Christmas greeting with a Christian message. Except for a star and the words "With warm Christian greetings," the back cover of the little book, which is white, has been left blank, affording space for the sender to sign his name or write a short personal greeting.

This Christian Gospel is obtainable from the American Bible Society's offices at the rate of \$2.50 per hundred, postpaid. For less than a hundred, please add 10¢ for postage. To expedite delivery, orders should be sent with remittance, as early as possible to

The American Bible Society
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ONE THOUSAND TONS OF BIBLES

C. IRVING BENSON

THE BIBLE HOUSE in Queen Victoria Street is one of the most exciting places in all great London. Every year it sends out 1,000 tons of Bibles --- written in 836 languages --- to the ends of the earth!

Standing in the library of the Bible House my *imagination kindled*. First, I asked to see Mary Jones' Bible--the actual copy in Welsh which she saved for six years to buy and walked 50 miles to get in the closing years of the 18th century.

I thought of her going bare-footed across country, rugged, mountainous, boggy with great stretches of moorland. Only when she reached Bala did she condescend to respectability by putting on her shoes and stockings.

The minister from whom she secured the precious Bible told her story to the Religious Tract Society and pleaded the need for Bibles in Wales. Joseph Hughes was inspired to say: "If for Wales why not for the kingdom? and if for the kingdom, why not for the world?"

And thus was set on foot the movement that led to the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

It stirred me to hold in my hand the Bible in Tibetan which took nearly 100 years to complete.

Two Moravian missionaries who tried to enter Tibet in 1865 were turned away so they veered westward and went to Ladakh on the border of Kashmir. A fugitive from the closed land taught them Tibetan.

For years they sat at the feet of this man, called Gergan, learning the language and translating the Gospels, printing them on a little press of their own.

Gergan's son, Yoseb, became a Chris-

tian and after his father's death was sent to the Church Missionary Society's school at Srinagar in Kashmir. He determined to complete the work begun by his Moravian friends and spent 35 years of his life from the age of 24 to 59 translating the rest of the Bible and revising the whole.

When the manuscript was complete, it was sent to this Bible House in London. Then the Second World War broke out, and it was hidden in the crypt of Ripon Cathedral until the bombing was over.

In 1945 the Bible Society was beset with many printing difficulties and decided that this Bible must be printed in Lahore.

Thousands of sheets of paper were prepared with crude chemicals mixed with the yolks of eggs to make them like transfers and on these sheets Yoseb Gergan, now over 70, undertook to write out the whole Bible by hand. He worked day and night.

The doctors said: "He may live five days or five months. There is a fire burning within him keeping him alive."

On August 16, 1946, the writing of the Bible was completed and five days later Yoseb died.

After many adventures the hand-written Bible was reproduced by a photolitho process and copies began to circulate in Tibet in 1949, carried into the country by Tibetan Christians of the frontier provinces.

This is one of the romantic stories of the translations there in the library in Queen Victoria Street--a story to remember about the Bible, and especially on Bible Sunday.

As I came away I looked up over the entrance and read an inscription cut in an open book of stone: "The Word of the Lord endureth forever."

AT THE END OF OUR TETHER

J. ITHEL JONES

AT THE end of our tether.' Of course, we often imagine we are there when we are not, really. We say, 'I'm nearly at the end of my tether,' when really all that has happened is that we have become rather over-tired or that we have accumulated a far too heavy programme for the coming hours. But there are among the readers of the words those who have at some time or another reached the point where they could truly say, 'I am at the end of my tether.' The point is that that experience was *given you* in order that you might learn a *new trust*. It is a case of man's *extremity* becoming God's *opportunity*.

Of course, we must be very careful where and how we say this. It is perfectly all right for us to take this truth for ourselves. We should not be too ready to offer it to others. Never say to your neighbour, 'God allowed you to get to that point because you did not trust Him enough.' That would be the height of presumption. But in our own case, if we are able to look back steadily and say quietly, 'Perhaps I reached that point because I needed to learn to *lean harder*,' it will doubtless turn to our salvation.

It is interesting to note the context in which Paul has set this saying. He speaks of 'the trouble...in Asia.' When we turn to Acts 19 and read of the incidents at Philippi, we realize that 'the trouble' was a bout of persecution and imprisonment on account of the work of the gospel. And Paul is saying that this kind of thing was sent, or at least permitted, in order that he might trust God the more. What an *extraordinary claim*! I wonder if his thought is becoming excessively Hebrew just here? The characteristically Hebrew way of speaking would suggest that the difference between a 'purpose' clause and a 'consequence' clause was not as clear cut to him as it is to us. Whether it is theo-

logically defensible to say that God sends persecution in order that the persecuted may learn a new dependence upon Him is, to say the least, questionable. But that such trouble often results in a new trust no one would deny. The point *here is* that Paul was brought to the *end of his tether* and in that situation *learned a new trust in God*.

That is the only place some of us can learn to trust God. Read Psalm 107 at your leisure and there you will find a catalogue of such people. Note the recurring refrain, 'Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble. There you have a picture of men perfectly content to go on their way without God until they come to the end of their tether. It takes trouble, *great trouble*, to turn some of us to God. It was at such a time of extremity that an overwhelming vision of God came to Isaiah. 'In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up.'

Can we interpret our experiences in the light of all this? Hugh Redwood has suggested that when we come to the end of our tether we remember that GOD IS at the *other end*. And what the experience really taught us was, that the tether *does not break*!

Paul interpreted his 'thorn in the flesh' in this light. It got him down. So much so that he called it 'a messenger of Satan to buffet me.' Three times he cried desperately to God for deliverance. What he got was, 'My grace is sufficient for thee,' *Lean harder, Paul*.

At a *Watchnight Service*, as we looked back over the old year, we used these prayers of thanksgiving: 'For the disciplines that have given a finer temper to our living; for the denial of gratifications in which we have recognized at length Thy wisdom and gracious providence; for the faith that gave us the strength to walk in days of trial, *we Give Thee Thanks*.' Are not these just our 'Amen' to the affirmation that coming to the *end of our tether* teaches us to trust not in ourselves, but in God, who can *raise the dead*.

Have we caught the point of that last phrase --- to trust 'in God who can raise the dead'? When a person comes to the end of his tether he asks whether God can really bring him through. It is all very well to quote verses like 'Our sufficiency is of God,' or 'His mercies fail not.' But when a man is at the end of things, repeating verses of Scripture, which were stored away in the mind in those halcyon days when all the world

was young is not much point. A man needs to have the assurance in his own heart that God is *absolutely supreme* and that *He is available*. Where can he get that? How is he to know when he comes to the end of things that they are not beyond God? Now, perhaps, we see the point of describing God in this context as one 'Who can raise the dead.' Death is the seemingly final and ultimate fact with which man is confronted. 'Where there's life, there's hope,' we say. Does that mean that when death has taken possession things have gone too far even for God? No! The God in whom we are called to trust is one 'Who

TEXT: II Cor. 1:9 "We believe now that we had this experience of coming to the end of our tether that we might learn to trust, not in ourselves, but in God who can raise the dead."

can raise the dead.' What Paul is doing here is arguing from the greater to the less. Can God *bring you through*? You have before you the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. If God achieved that, He can achieve *anything*! His power can meet any contingency. Lean hard, believer!

A NIGHT OF PRAYER

ONE NIGHT alone in prayer might make us new men, changed from *poverty of soul to spiritual wealth*, from trembling to triumphing! We have an example of it in the life of Jacob. Aforetime the crafty shuffler, always bargaining and calculating, unlovely in almost every respect, *yet one night in prayer*, turned the supplanter into a prevailing prince, and robed him with celestial grandeur. From that night he lives on the sacred page as one of the *nobility of Heaven*.

Could not we, at least now and then, in these weary earthbound years, hedge about a single night for such *enriching traffic with the skies*? What, have we no sacred ambition? Are we deaf to the yearnings of divine love? Yet for wealth and for science men will cheerfully quit their warm couches and *cannot we do it now and again for the love of God and the good of souls*? Where is our zeal, our gratitude, our sincerity?

I am ashamed while I thus upbraid both myself and you. May we often tarry at Jabbok, and cry with Jacob, as he *grasped the angel* ---

With thee all night I mean to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day.

Surely, Brethren, if we have given whole days to folly, we can afford a space for heavenly wisdom. (Luke 6:12)

--Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

PREPARATION FOR PRAYER

The mood of prayer needs cultivation.

The reading of a psalm is one of the best ways of putting ourselves in readiness. The Psalter is the prayer book God prepared for His people. Great men of prayer in every generation have gained their skill from it. Try reading a few psalms to attune your spirit to God.

Once Peter the Barber came to Luther with the request, "Won't you help me to pray?" The great Reformer took out time from his busy life to write a thirty-page booklet for Peter explaining his own practices. Luther would take a petition, or a commandment, or a verse of Scripture and make of it "four wreaths" and intertwine them. First he found instruction in the passage and tried to learn all it could teach him. Then he found in it something to be thankful for and wove that into his prayers. Thirdly he approached it as if it were a mirror and learned from it his own imperfections. This led him to confession. Finally it revealed how much God could still do with and for him in his personal sanctification. This led to his petitions and intercessions. That was the secret of Luther's power.

George Mueller of Bristol, England, arose early and gave the first half-hour

(See Page 307)

THE CHURCH AT WORK



The Pew Appraises The Pulpit

In an article appearing in "Christianity Today," the editor suggests that the layman has a right to expect certain things from the pulpit. Among others, he lists the following four points with his pertinent comments:

AUTHORITY: The Christian message has a basis in authority, the authority of the Scriptures in which God has spoken by the Holy Spirit. Without such authority, something is lacking, and the pew is easily affected by the deficiency. The preacher needs the authority derived from God Himself and His revealed truth if he would speak to the hearts and lives of other men. The biblically based "Thus saith the Lord" still impresses the hearer more than the profoundest opinions of men.

POWER: Power in preaching depends on the presence of the Holy Spirit, both in the preparation and in the delivery of the sermon. For such power there is no substitute. Human wisdom, oratorical flights, literary style, personal opinions, all will soon be forgotten. God's presence in a sermon is imparted to its hearers and carried away in the heart. On such power from the Holy Spirit rests the hope for a repetition of the experience of the men on the Emmaus road: "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

URGENCY: This urgency is not one of a possibly imminent world cataclysm. Nor is it an urgency having to do with physical, economic, or social well-being, important as these may be. The Christian ethic, as a matter of personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and as a way of life, is the most important decision with which man can be confronted. Until the issue between God and man is settled aright there can be no right solution of man's problems with man. Jesus expressed the urgency of His own mission to this world in the arresting phrase "should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Perishing" is a desperately serious matter, and finding the way to prevent it is certainly a matter of the greatest urgency. The second phase of a Christian faith—how to live as a Christian—is also a matter of urgency. In both matters the pew needs to capture this sense of urgency from the message of the pulpit.

DECISION: A good salesman works for a decision. A good agent for Jesus Christ does the same. We laymen need to face up to the universal need for such a decision. Only too often we find ourselves confronted with an invitation to "join the church". Such a step is a vitally important matter, but man's first decision has to do with the acceptance of Jesus Christ—Who He is and what He did. Many of the problems in individual lives, and in the church, stem from the fact that only too often such a decision has never been made. There are many subsequent decisions the Christian must make; in fact, they must be made daily. When Christianity becomes a vital reality to the individual, such decisions inevitably follow.

Finally, the pew should look at the pulpit through eyes and from a heart that has prayed for the one standing there as a messenger of God. In a true

sense, he stands a dying man preaching to dying men. He needs and deserves the sympathetic understanding and prayerful support of those to whom he ministers.

The Church moves forward as pew and pulpit unite in one common faith and purpose: to know Christ and to make Him known. --*From Redeemer Record.*

Candlelight Choral Christmas Service



Wednesday Evening (Prior to Christmas)
 Processional (Congregation seated)
 No. 94, Hymnal
 Order of Vespers.....Page 41, Hymnal
 Psalm: Cantate Domino..No. 667, Hymnal
 Men's Chorus:
 a) "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming".....Praetorius
 b) "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen".....
 English Carol
 First Lesson
 Intermediate Choir:
 a) "Sing Noel".....Marryott
 b) "Beside Thy Cradle".....Bach
 c) "Westminster Carol".....French-English Carol
 Second Lesson
 Junior Choir:
 a) "Cradle Hymn".....Huhn
 b) "Unto Us a Boy Is Born".....
 15th Century Latin Carol
 c) "Saviour, Thou of Israel".....14th Century Carol
 Senior Choir:
 a) "The Searching Carol".....Marryott
 b) "O Little Town of Bethlehem".....Praetorius
 c) "A Joyous Christmas Song".....Norwegian Carol
 d) "There Shall a Star Come Out of Jacob".....
 Mendelssohn
 Hymn No. 87
 Combined Chorus:
 a) "The Christmas Story".....Goldsworthy
 b) "As Lately We Watched".....Austrian Carol
 c) "From Heaven Above to Earth I Came".....
 Luther-Bach
 Offering
 Hymn No. 646
 Magnificat
 Closing Prayers and Blessing
 Recessional—No. 91, Hymnal
 —Lutheran Church of The Redeemer, St.
 l, Minn.

Christmas Candlelight Service

Organ Prelude:

"March of the Magi Kings"—Dubois.

Processional:

"Lamp of Our Feet"—Lambeth, C.M.
 (Choir and Congregation).

Call to Worship:

"I was glad when they said unto me, let
 us go unto the house of Jehovah."

Hymns:

"It Came Upon a Midnight Clear . . ."

"O Come, All Ye Faithful . . ."

"Hark, Hark, the Herald Angels Sing . . ."

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:1-20.

Hymns:

"O Little Town of Bethlehem."

"Joy to the World."

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 9:2-7.

Choir: "Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly
 Light"—Bach.

"O Come to My Heart, Lord Jesus"—
 Ambrose.

Meditation: (Pastor).

Hymns:

"Angels, from the Realms of Glory."

"O Gladsome Light . . ."

"All Glory, Laud and Honor."

Candlelighting:

(Altar boy, or appointed attendant will hand candle to the pastor, who lights it from the large candle in the chancel, beside the manger scene; deacons or ushers will come to the chancel steps, and light candles from pastor's candle, and proceed down various aisles, to light candles of worshippers nearest the aisle, who in turn pass on the light to other occupants of each pew, until all are lighted. Pastor kneels at altar steps.)

"Silent Night, Holy Night."

(Every worshipper joins in this hymn, which may be followed by other familiar hymns, or carols, if desired.)

Pastor: Prayer, closing with Lord's Prayer, in which all present join, and candles are extinguished, and these are gathered by ushers during the following hymn singing.

Hymns:

"Hark, Ten Thousand Harps and Voices."

"Jesus, My Lord, My God, My All."

"O Master of All . . ."

Christmas Offering: Pastor accepts at Chancel

steps and pronounces Benediction after depositing offering plates on altar.

Benediction: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

Hymn:

"Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty."

Postlude: "Gloria"—*Andre.*

Christmas Program

This Christmas Program was offered by Madrigal Choir, Senior Band, and the Dramatics Club, Williamston High School, Michigan, and is suitable for any High School group, Community or Church group. Hour 4 P.M., week prior to Christmas. Christmas setting.

Program, Madrigal Choir

"Rejoice and Sing".....*Bach*
"Carol of the Bells".....*Leontovich*
"I Wonder As I Wander".....(*Appalachian*)
"The Sleigh".....*Kountz*
"I Heard the Bells On Christmas Day".....*Calvin*

Senior Band

"Winter Sunset".....*Frankliser*
"Adoramus Te" and "Sanctus".....*Palestrina-Lake*

A Christmas Carol

DRAMATICS CLUB

Act I—Combination office and apartment of Ebenezer Scrooge.

Act II—Scrooge's apartment and Scrooge's boyhood home.

Act III—Scrooge's apartment and the Cratchit home.

Act IV—Scrooge's apartment.

Characters: Scrooge, Marley's Ghost, First, Second, Third Spirits, Mr. Cratchit, Mrs. Cratchit, Tiny Tim, and supporting cast.

Music:

By the Choir.

The Christmas Story, Tableau and Narration
Music by Choir and Band.

Tableau Characters: Mary, Joseph, Angel, Shepherds (3), Wise Men (3).

(Narration, Scripture version of the prophecy, and the birth of the Savior, manger scene, shepherd and visit of three Wise Men.)



Christmas Vesper Service

"Glory to God in the Highest, and on Earth, Peace, Goodwill Toward Men."

Organ: "Pastorale in G"—*Carelli.*

Doxology: Invocation, and Lord's Prayer.

Hymn: "It Came Upon the Midnight . . ."

Responsive Reading: "Nativity" or Scripture, Matt. 2:1-23.

Anthem: "Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones"—*Samuel*—Junior Choir.

Christmas Prayer.

Hymn: "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks"—*Handel.*

Presentation of Gifts (Clothing, food, and toys for orphanages or shut-ins locally).

Offertory: "Luther's Cradle Hymn."

Solo: "There's a Song in the Air"—*Speaks.*

Meditation: "Meaning of Christmas in our today."

Hymn: "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing"
Mendelssohn.

Benediction.

Organ: "O Come, O Come Immanuel"
French.

—*West Washington Baptist Church, D.C.*



UNIVERSAL WEEK OF PRAYER

The "Universal Week of Prayer" will be observed by evangelical Christians in America January 6 through 13, 1957.

The folder available this year will provide the following daily themes:

The Christian and God

The Christian and the Lord
Jesus Christ

The Christian and the Church

The Christian and the Family

The Christian and Business

The Christian and the World

The Spiritual Life Commission of the National Ass'n. of Evangelicals, 108 No. Main St., Wheaton, Ill., is encouraging churches in America to follow the pattern of the week which English churches have followed, the people coming together in a different church each day of the week, prayer themes taken from the folder, provided by the Association free of charge, upon request.

FARMERS AT THE CROSSROADS

EZRA TAFT BENSON, Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., tells the story of the actual facts facing present-day farmers in America, to Carlisle Barger, and these fact-statements are published by the Devin-Adair Company, and distributed by

The Constitution and Free Enterprise

Foundation, 210 East 43rd Street,

New York 17, New York

at special group rates to Ministers, and other group leaders for a limited time only. This is a "must" item for every conscientious minister. Write for price on number of copies needed for your local groups.

CHRISTMAS CAROL SHEETS

The Bible Lands Missions Aid Society, 230, Coastal Chambers, 172, Buckingham Palace Road, London, S.W.1, founded in 1854 to assist American Missions in Turkey and the Middle East and their main work for a hundred years, has made available an appealing Carol Sheet, containing 21-popular Carols, and well illustrated with in-and-near Bethlehem-scenes, which may be had at \$3 a hundred. Orders sent to the above London address should be accompanied by a postal money order for the number ordered.

CHRISTMAS FOLDERS OFFERING ENVELOPES

Write to the Fine Art Litho Company, 66035 W. Gross Point Rd., Chicago 31, Ill., for prices and samples of feautifully illustrated and printed cards, folders, and offering envelopes. You will like them.

FELLOWSHIP PLANS CHRIST'S WORK-DAY AS CHURCH BENEFIT

There was a busy Saturday ahead for a group of Buffalo-area young people. The Senior High Westminster Fellowship planned to sponsor a "Christ's Work Day" in the Presbyterian Church, Cheektowaga, New York.

Anyone in the community was invited to call the church during the day and request assistance of such nature as baby-sitting, cleaning, putting up the storm windows, running of errands, other odd jobs. Members of the group planned to do the work and accept payment at whatever rate the patron judged the service merited. Proceeds were to be used for the benefit of the Fellowship plans.

RELATE WORSHIP TO DAILY LIVING

"People want a conviction in God that will withstand persecution, war, and ostracism," the Rev. Philip F. McNairy, dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, said in a joint worship service of the YMCA and YWCA of Buffalo, N.Y. area staff-members recently.

Rev. McNairy addressed the staff members in the YWCA chapel at a service held in observance of the 89th annual-observance of the World YMCA-YWCA Week of Prayer, and urged the staff-workers to *make worship relevant to*

the experience of the day! He said too many young people are toying with religion.

"They participate in crafts and sports but are reluctant to give their time for the more serious things, and if we could only learn to keep uppermost in our minds these three things, --God has a purpose, God cares, and God will win, we would be doing a great service to young people.

THE PRAYERS OF SUSANNA WESLEY

This handbook of some 60-pages, edited and Arranged by W. L. Doughty, published by Philosophical Libr. Pub., \$2.50, is a gem that every believer in prayer and its power will wish to *study*. The 4-page chapter on Susanna Wesley is worthy of special study and thought, in that it contains the basic qualities of character and faith, underlying the 40-prayers chosen by the editor, W. L. Doughty. Study and contemplation of the worthy contents of the book will bring a lasting reward.

DEVOTIONS AND PRAYERS. of MARTIN LUTHER

Selected and Translated by Dr. Andrew Kosten, Baker Book House, 111-p. \$1.50

This hand-book presents 52-one page devotion on the Psalms, and as many brief prayers on the facing pages. They are translated into modern, readable English by Dr. Kosten of the First Presbyterian Church at Ridgefield Park, New Jersey. These writings of Martin Luther have the *timelessness of truth*. They have the directness and forcefulness which characterized the Author. Here is admirable and basic material for daily devotions, either group or individual. It is an excellent *gift book*.

Divine Mystery

Somehow God weaves the strangest thing

Into a pattern fair;

He took an angel song, a star,

A Hebrew peasant pair,

Some shepherds on Judean hills

And unknown Wise Men three,

A stable cold and dark and damp

A manger 'neath an inn—

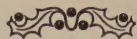
And now

A weary world kneels hopefully

Before the Babe of Bethlehem.

—James Allen Kestle.

SERMONS



THE USE AND MISUSE OF SUNDAY

ARTHUR H. KOLSTI

TEXT: *Luke 6:1-11.*

THERE will be no sermon this morning. The storm windows at the parsonage have not been put up yet, and as Sunday offers a fine day to work around the house, I thought a shorter service would allow time for such work. *I hope you will understand!*

If that statement were true, it would certainly be a new twist to an old story. How frequently do we hear the refrain--"Sunday is my only day to work." There was a time when Sunday held an unchallenged distinction among the days of the week, but that distinction is rapidly disappearing. Today, we transact business on Sunday, go to sports events, do our work. The day no longer holds any special claim upon many minds as being a day intended to be different from others. Sunday is fast becoming just another day in the week.

Even among many who bear the name Christian, Sunday no longer brings with it the imperatives of church attendance and worship. Now, I fully realize there are many here to whom that does not apply. You are here Sunday after Sunday, and it is your fidelity, and the fidelity of others like you, that constantly refreshes the spirit of the ministry. Yet, the need remains to examine the claims of the *Christian Lord's day*, to challenge secular attitudes, and to articulate our own witness concerning the use of Sunday. The fact remains that a large segment of our Christian population is guilty of misusing Sunday.

Let us begin by setting Sunday against the background of its Scriptural basis. Our Hebrew-Christian tradition has always held the Sabbath to be the

order of God and not the invention of man. One of the earliest Hebrew laws in the book of Deuteronomy gives this sanction to the Sabbath.

"..that thy manservant thy maid servant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God, brought thee out thence, --- through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day." (Deut. 5:14-15)

Two reasons are here given for Sabbath observance. The humanitarian reason of providing a day of rest. We could certainly marshall the facts from the doctor's office to underline our human need for periodic rest and recreation. The other reason is moral-- "and remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt." The Sabbath was to be a day of commemoration, a day when the Hebrews would recall the mercy of God in their history. The Sabbath was to preserve Israel from the pitfall of pride and arrogance.

The Christian Church retained the essentials of the Hebrew Sabbath but re-established it in the light of the resurrection. Each Sunday was to be a *little Easter*, a day when Christians would commemorate the *triumph of Jesus*, a day when they would recall their indebtedness to their Redeemer.

Sunday, then, is a day of *Grace*, a day ordained by the Creator for the specific purpose of worship, renewal, and remembrance. No one states this better than the Psalmist, "this is the day that the Lord hath made, let us rejoice and be glad in it." The proper use of Sunday is a recognition of God as the *Giver, Sustainer and Redeemer of Life!*

It is here that our secular attitude

is the reverse of a truly Christian attitude. Many see God *not as the giver of this day, but as the intruder*, a disturber who wants to claim time not rightly His. And when we set up our own interests as having the highest claim upon our lives are we not forgetting that we are dependent creatures? Is this not like the saw telling the carpenter how to build the house?

How do we think when we stay away from church? We arise on Sunday, we eat breakfast, scan the morning paper, then about ten o'clock the attack of "*morbus sabbaticus*" comes. We experience a general feeling of uneasiness. Then we rationalize—"Well, I really do not need this, today." This is what Elton Trueblood has called the Angelic Fallacy, a new and subtle type of self-righteousness of the sort expressed by Little Jack Horner, "what a good boy am I."

Remember, Sunday was ordained to meet our human need of fellowship with God, our need of a constantly rekindled memory of Jesus. Sunday is the day for inadequate people.

Now, someone may say, "Well, I can worship God in my own yard and gain strength." While true in theory, in actual practice this is a naive sort of thinking, it becomes platitude. George Medley tells of the father gathering the family for a Sunday outing who called to his little girl, "Come on, we can sing hymns on the beach." She replied, "But we won't, will we?"

Yes, we can worship God outside the church, *but we won't, will we?* Every field of human interest produces its own literature. Now, we see no books coming off the press related to such themes as "Prayers for picnics", "Hymns for the highway", or "Meditations for the Ball Park." -- You see, God knows us, that is why He instituted the worship of the Christian Church. It is what the Reformers called "*a help to our infirmity*."

So, when you meet your fellow member whom you've missed in church, ask him: "We missed you Sunday." "Well, I was busy." "Oh, did you cancel your dinner because of business?" "No, of course not." "No, you wouldn't miss that, for we need to eat, but remember, we also need spiritual food."

Even Jesus recognized the necessity of regular worship. The Gospels say, "he went to the Temple as was his custom." Jesus recognized the place of ceremony, he respected the Temple. Some have misunderstood his arguments

with the Scribes and Pharisees over Sabbath observance to mean a disregard for Sabbath keeping. We read this morning how one such argument arose because Jesus healed on the Sabbath and another because he allowed the disciples to pick corn. Now to the Pharisees it was quite proper to heal on the Sabbath, but only if the patient might die. If healing could be deferred, then one should not heal on the Sabbath. To Jesus, human need came first. The needs of the disciples and the man with the withered hand were of supreme importance to him. So the controversy raged around that point. Jesus desired to fill the Sabbath with the Love of God. "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Yes, we need Sunday, for we need to be reminded about the deep dimensions of life. To misuse Sunday is to misuse our freedom. In our own country we always speak of "*this nation under God!*" When we forget the faith that underlies freedom, then that freedom degenerates into a restless egoism, and that describes the condition of much of life today. The psychologist warns us that *extreme busyness* can be a sign of inner sickness and we want to heed the warning signs. Our own interests have a way of becoming our prison and only a transcendent loyalty that directs itself to God in Christ can deliver man from his *self-made prison*.

But, I suspect that for most the real cause of misusing Sunday is not lack of time, but lack of a truly Christian frame of values. "The world is *too much* with us, getting and spending, we lay waste our powers." After all, those who put forward the *time* excuse find time for their favourite TV program, to play cards, to entertain their friends.

We do a lot of joking about church attendance, but it is really a serious matter. When God is left out, the *half gods* return. That was the great warning of the prophets of Israel. The Israelites forgot the source of their blessings, they turned to their garden and household gods. So, the prophets pleaded: "The ox knows its owner, and the ass its master's crib; but Israel does not listen and the passing years soon found the armies of Assyria encamped outside the gates of a morally bankrupt Jerusalem."

When the people of any community forget the real demensions of life, that society is already in process of dissolution. In our *own Church life*, we need to remember this. Protestantism prizes

freedom, but the price of freedom is discipline! Brave men have died to give us a free church in a free country, let us not sell our birthright for a mess of pottage.

In that portion of Luke where the pharisees argue with Jesus over Sabbath rules, there is one man who did the right thing on a Sabbath day. He brought his *withered hand* to Jesus. Today, we are called to put our hand to many baffling personal and social problems. Today we need firm, purposeful hands. Sunday is the time to join this man before Jesus, holding out our hands for healing. Then we will find the *silent tide of renewal flowing into our lives*, and making them *orderly, strong, and useful!* Sunday is the day to seek out the Lord, for in Him *is our salvation!*

THINGS THAT HINDER

CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY

AN UNFORGIVING SPIRIT

TEXT: II Cor. 2:7, 11. Ye ought rather to forgive him.... lest Satan should get an advantage of us.

THE offender of whom Paul is speaking is, no doubt, the same person whose gross transgression against the moral law, and apparently, also, against Paul himself, had occasioned the writing of the First Letter to the Corinthians. In that Letter, sent by Titus, Paul had required the Church at Corinth to take steps to discipline the offender and uphold the purity of the Church. Paul was in great distress about the situation in the Church, and -- particularly with reference to this offender. But, at length, somewhere in Macedonia, Titus came to him with the *good news* that the Church had carried out his instructions, disciplined the offender, and that the latter had acknowledged his transgression.

Now the Apostle's thought is for the *transgressor*, and he writes the Second Letter to the Church at Corinth, telling

them *that they must forgive* this offender and deal kindly with him, lest the man should be "swallowed up with sorrow," which means overcome with despair, and lest also Satan should get an advantage of them.

There are many things which hinder us in the Christian life, but perhaps there is no hindering which is so heavy and which drags us down and behind in the Christian life as the weight of an *unforgiving spirit*.

1. The Hindering Effect of An Unforgiving Spirit

The importance of this matter of forgiveness, and the danger of harboring an *unforgiving spirit*, is made clear by the repeated references to it in the teachings of Christ and the New Testament. Indeed, so much is this so that today, if one says a man has a Christian spirit, it does not mean that he is a generous man, or an honest man, or a chaste man, or a man who controls his passions, but a man who is ready and able to forget an injury and forgive a wrong. A bitter, unforgiving spirit is one of the best witnesses to the power of Satan in man's soul.

In his "Picturesque Notes of Edinburgh," Robert Louis Stevenson tells of two spinster sisters who had a falling out, and thenceforth no word was ever spoken between them. Yet, either because of lack of means, or fear of scandal, they continued to live together in the same house. A chalk line on the floor separated their two domains. "It bisected the doorway and the fireplace, so that each could go out and in and do her cooking, without violating the territory of the other." So through the years they lived together, and yet *separated, within the four walls* of that home. That *visible and invisible* chalk line separated them in their household and kitchen toil, in their devotions, in their hours of reading, and in the silent watches of the night. No one could ever describe that as a *happy life*. The chalk line of an *unforgiving spirit separates and isolates* multitudes of souls.

Samuel Johnson wrote Boswell, "Life is but short.... Let us not throw away any of our days upon useless resentment, or contend who shall hold out

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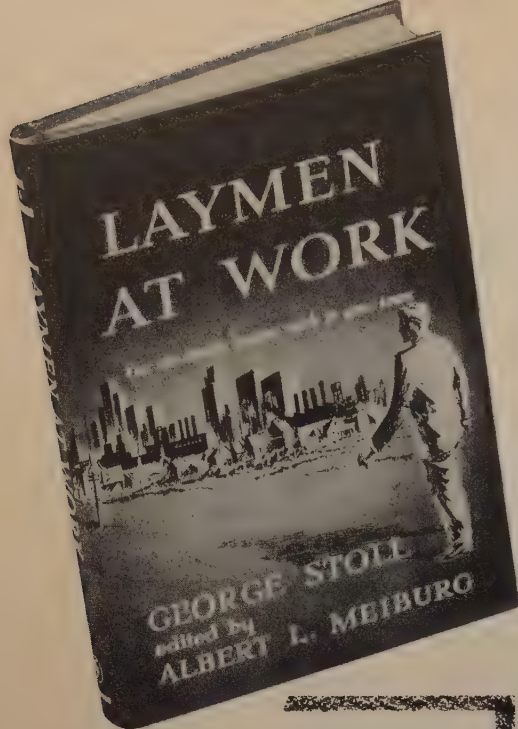
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longest in stubborn malignity. It is best not to be angry, and best in the second place to be quickly reconciled."

Another, and still more serious, effect of an *unforgiving spirit* upon the *unforgiving soul* is that it cancels and forfeits God's forgiveness. If we harbor an unforgiving spirit, we break down and demolish the very bridge to heaven over which we ourselves must pass. The Apostle tells us to be tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us. And our Lord taught us to pray, "Forgive us our *trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.*" That principle of forgiveness in order that we might receive forgiveness, Jesus repeatedly taught and emphasized. In the Sermon on the Mount, He said that the man who was bringing a gift to the altar at the temple, and there remembered that he had a *falling out with his brother*, should leave his gift before the altar, and then go his way and *first be reconciled to his brother* and then *come and offer his gift*. Thus Jesus taught that a *forgiving spirit is a condition of true worship and prayer.*

But the most extended and most striking utterance of Jesus on this subject was the great Parable of the Two Debtors. Peter had asked Jesus, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Till seven times?" The answer of Jesus to this was, "No, until seven times, but until seventy times seven." That is, repeated and unlimited forgiveness. And then to show the danger of an unforgiving spirit, he related the Parable of the Two Debtors. There was one servant who owed his Lord ten thousand talents, an enormous sum, amounting to many dollars. According to the law and custom of the day, his Lord commanded that he and his family should be sold into slavery, and thus at least a part of the debt be paid. Whereupon, the servant fell down before his master and said, "Lord, have patience with me and I will pay thee all." That of course, was impossible. Though he should live to be as old as Methuselah, he could never hope to pay this huge debt which he had incurred, probably through dishonesty. But his Lord was moved with compassion, and, setting

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him free, forgave him the debt.

With a light heart, this servant, whose enormous debt had been forgiven, went out from the presence of his lord and down the steps of the palace on to the street. There he chanced to meet one of his fellow servants, who owed him a trifling sum, a hundred pence. Taking him by the throat, he shook him and said, “Pay me that thou owest!” His fellow servant fell down at his feet and besought him to have mercy in the very same word with which he had besought his lord. “Have patience with me and I will pay thee all.” But the hard-hearted servant forgetting how his own great debt had just been forgiven him, cast the man and his family into prison.

There is a great deal in the world of what Pope called “man’s inhumanity to man.” But, thank God, there is also a great deal of man’s *humanity* to man. The other servants in this king’s household heard of this harsh and cruel treatment, visited upon the man who owed the one hundred pence, “and they were sorry.” They were sorry. Compassion is the fountain and impulse back of all noble action. They were not only sorry, but they acted upon their sorrow, and told their lord what had taken place. Whereupon, the king summoned the first debtor and said to him, “O thou wicked servant! I forgave thee all that debt because thou desiredst me. Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?” Having thus rebuked him, his lord delivered him over to the jailors and tormentors till *he should pay all that was due unto him*. Then Jesus draws the point of his sermon, and how clear and unmistakable it is: “So likewise shall my Heavenly Father do unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses.”

II. The Blessed Influence of A Forgiving Spirit

We have seen the blighting and withering effect of an unforgiving spirit. Now let us look on the other side. There is, first of all, the possible influence and effect upon the one who is forgiven. The Roman Catholic doctrine of no divorce, claims for authority, not only teachings of our Lord, but also the spir-



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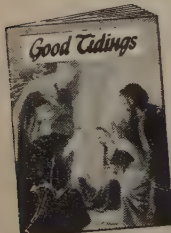
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it of that teaching, for one of the reasons given is that a legal separation puts a barrier in the way of *forgiveness*, and reconciliation. In another passage, and immediately after he had related the beautiful parable of the *Ninety and Nine* and the *One Lost Sheep*, Jesus spoke of a dispute between brothers, and said

that the one who felt that he had been wronged, before breaking off relationship with his brother, and before bringing him before the court of the Church should endeavor in a private interview to be reconciled unto him, saying, "If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother."

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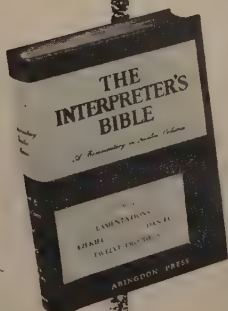
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In *Quo Vadis*, that great tale of early Christian history, *Chilo*, the philosopher, thief, and betrayer of the innocent, had sold the wife and daughter of his friend *Glaucus* into slavery, and had tried to *kill Glaucus for his faith in Christ*. When Nero passed down the lines of human agony in the Vatican Gardens, where the pitch-covered Christians were burning

the pillars to which they had been bound, Chilo walked by his side. As the wind for a moment blew the smoke away from the face of Glaucus, Chilo, smitten with remorse, stretched his arms up towards the agonizing martyr and cried out, "Glaucus, in Christ's name, forgive me!" At that the head of the martyr moved slightly, and from the top of the pillar was heard a voice like a groan, "I forgive." Immediately, Chilo, turning towards Nero, lifted an accusing hand and said, "There is the incendiary!" The same day he was baptized into the Christian faith; and when his torturers were binding him and piercing him with iron tongs, Chilo kissed their hands with forgiveness. Forgiven himself, he had learned to forgive,-- and he died in peace.

In the National Gallery in London, and others, you will see many of the beautiful paintings of the great portrait painter, George Romney. At the age of 19, he married a young woman who had nursed him through a fever. Then, having heard another painter, Sir Joshua Reynolds, say that marriage spoiled an artist, he deserted his wife and two children, and went to London to seek fame as a painter. The one who inspired many of his portraits, and whom he painted into a score or more of his characters, such as St. Cecilia, the Magdalene, and Joan Arc, was the beautiful, but notorious Emma Hart, afterwards Lady Hamilton, whose feet Lord Nelson cast away as honor. In his old age, near the end of his life, desolate and almost out of his mind, he went back to the wife he had deserted long years before, who received him and nursed him until he died. "Romney's Remorse," after a friend had tried to comfort him in his remorse, with the thought that regardless of the low part he had played in life, he had at least, won the painter's fame, and Romney replied:

"The best in me that sees the worst in me,
And groans to see it, finds no comfort there."

But what he does find comfort in is the hope that the heavenly forgiveness which his wife has shown him may be granted him of heaven:

"O yes, I hope, or fancy, that perhaps

*those who want
the best use...*

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and thence ---

For you forgive me, you are sure of
that ---

Reflected sheds a light on the for-
given."

And that, indeed, is one of the great
blessings of forgiveness. It sheds the
*reflected light of heaven upon the soul
of the one who has sinned.*

Not only does the forgiving spirit bless
him who receives forgiveness, but blesses
him who bestows it. Forgiveness, like
mercy, it is twice blessed. "It blesses-
him that gives and him that takes." For-

givenness is the fruit of faith, and in the
great examples of forgiveness which we
have in the Bible, that is always brought
out and emphasized. It was David's faith
in God, and in the destiny which God had
appointed him, that enabled him to for-
give Saul the great injury he had done-
him, and hold back his hand from venge-
ance when repeatedly he had the oppor-
tunity; and, at length, when Saul and
Jonathan had fallen in battle, to commem-
orate them with his beautiful ode.

It was faith, too, and not mere senti-
ment, that enabled Joseph to forgive his
brothers the great wrong they had done
him, and his father also, when they had
sold him into slavery. When his brothers,
after the death of Jacob, were fearful
that now he would wreak his vengeance
upon them, Joseph said to them, "Fear
not, for am I in the place of God?" As
for you, ye thought evil against me, but
God meant it unto good." The wrongs
and injuries which men suffer in life
are not accidental, but *providential*;
and have in them great benefit for the
soul, if we can take them as Joseph did,
and say that *God meant them unto good!*
The seaworm perforates the shell of the
mussel, or the oyster, but the mussel-
retaliates by closing the hole made by
its enemy with the lustrous pearl. So the
Christian spirit of forgiveness turns
evil into good and overcomes evil with
good.

On the Cross Christ prayed for His
persecutors and murderers, "Father,

forgive them, for they know not what they do." On the Cross, too, He forgave that Thief who, but a moment ago, with his brother-thief, had been mocking and reviling him. But, I always think that the greatest instance and example of our Lord's forgiveness of an injury was His forgiveness of Peter. It was Peter, you remember, who once asked Jesus how many times he was to forgive his brother. And Jesus told him until seventy times seven. I suppose Peter never really took that in, or understood it, till that night in the court-yard of Caiaphas, when, just after he had been cursing and denying his Lord, the door opened, and Jesus, bleeding and bound and spat upon, was led out into the court-yard, and hearing Peter's oath, turned and "looked upon Peter." When Peter saw that look of pity and love and forgiveness, then he understood, and not until then, what Jesus meant when He said, "Until seventy times Seven."

That was the kind of forgiveness Peter needed, and that is the kind of forgiveness which you and I need. I am sure Peter must have been thinking of that when, long afterwards, he wrote one of his Letters and said: "Be ye all of one mind. Love as brethren. Be pitiful, not rendering evil for evil; but contrariwise, blessing." And again, those wonderful words about Christ, "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow in His steps, Who when He was reviled reviled not again. when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to them that judged him unrighteously. Who His own self bare our sins in his body on the tree."

PRAYER (From page 291)

of each day to prayer. After pursuing this course he confessed, however, that his prayers often became shallow and repetitious. It occurred to him that he should first read the Word of God. As he reversed his procedures and spent fifteen or twenty minutes first with the Bible, he found that his prayers became much richer.

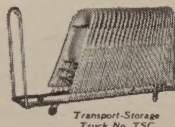
In a fuller sense our whole life is to be part of our preparation. Spurgeon said we prepare our prayers by preparing ourselves. God looks for sincerity, uprightness, earnestness, right desires.

Oscar E. Feucht, D.D.

October, 1956

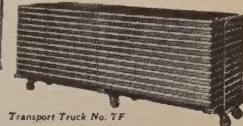


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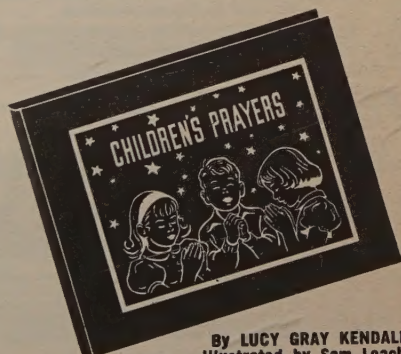
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INDEX OCTOBER, 1956

GENERAL

Appraisal, Pulpit	292
Bibles, Benson	289
Book Reviews	308
Candlelight Serv.	293
Christmas Bible	286
Christmas Carols	295
Christmas Folders	295
Christmas Program	294
Courage	290
Divine Mystery	295
Farmers, Benson	294
Forgiveness, Macartney	298
Prayer	291
Sunday, Kolsti	296
Vesper Service	294
Week of Prayer	294
Work-Day Benefit	295
Worship-Living	295
SERMONS	
Things That Hinder, Macartney	298
Use of Sunday, Kolsti	296

ARTICLES

Bibles, Benson	289
Christmas Bible	286
Our Tether, Jones	290
Prayer	291
CHURCH METHODS	
Appraisal of Pulpit	292
Candlelight Serv.	293
Christmas Carols	295
Christmas Folders	295
Christmas Program	294
Daily Living	295
Divine Mystery	295
Farmers, Benson	294
Martin Luther	295
Susanna Wesley	295
Vesper Service	294
Week of Prayer	294
SCRIPTURE TEXTS	
S—Sermons	
Luke 2:1-20	293
Luke 6:1-11(S)	296
Matt. 2:1-23	294
II Cor. 1:9(S)	291
II Cor. 2:7, 11(S)	298

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